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Addendum

BYELORUSSIAN SSR

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PART I

General assessment of progress

The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic is consistently engaged in the implementation of a variety of measures, including those of a legislative nature, aimed at guaranteeing women the enjoyment of rights and liberties on a basis of parity with men. The principle of equal rights for women and men in all areas of economic, political, social and cultural life is legislatively anchored in article 33 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR. Concern for the systematic improvement of women's living and working conditions and for the advancement of their status in all spheres of public life has been elevated to the level of State policy and is practically reflected in a special system of social, economic and legislative measures. These provide for a system of privileges or special benefits that enable women to combine successfully their roles as workers and mothers.

Byelorussian women participate actively and on an equal footing with men in the political life of the Republic. They make wide use of their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote and to be elected to the organs of State government. Women represent more than 37 per cent of the members of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR and about one half of the members of the local Councils of the People's Deputies. All told, women account for 64 per cent of the personnel of the agencies of State government and economic administration and of the bodies with responsibility for managing the activities of the co-operative and public organizations.

The existing legislation guarantees women in the Byelorussian SSR equal rights to the free selection of a profession or occupation, professional advancement, equal pay for equal work, and paid leave.

Although article 33 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR establishes equal rights for women and men (whereby this equality extends to opportunities in respect of education and vocational training as well as to the areas of work and remuneration for labour), in actual practice women enjoy a number of special privileges or benefits. Specifically, women become entitled to an old-age pension beginning at age 55 after a period of service of not less than 20 years; the pensionable age for men is 60 years with a period of employment of not less than 25 years. In the case of many occupations, depending on the nature of the work and the conditions under which it is performed, this age requirement has been lowered. Also eligible for this same privilege are women who have given birth to five or more children and have raised them until their eighth year. These benefits are provided under the system of State-financed social insurance. The social insurance fund is used to pay working women benefits for the temporary loss of the ability to work, allowances for the care of sick children, as well as pensions for old age, disability and the loss of a breadwinner, in addition to which these women also receive passes to sanatoria and rest homes or, in the case of their children, at pioneer camps.

In order to find solutions to the problems entailed in further improving the socio-economic living and working conditions of women and the assistance available to them for raising their children, the Government of the Byelorussian SSR is introducing the necessary steps and has charged the ministries and departments of the Republic with the formulation of the appropriate long-term measures.

The State's plans for the social and economic development of the Republic, which are prepared by the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR and acquire the force of law following their approval by the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR, take

into account the recommendations of the Commission on the Working and Living Conditions of Women and on the Protection of Mothers and Children, which was created under the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR in 1977. This Commission monitors both the implementation of the relevant tasks contemplated under the plan, as well as compliance with the legislation on the protection of women's rights. It collects and analyses data on various regions and economic branches with a view to their subsequent examination and the formulation of appropriate recommendations. Similar commissions with analogous functions operate in all six territorial areas (oblasts) of the Republic and also under the Minsk Municipal Council of the People's Deputies.

In 1977, there was established the Permanent Commission of the Byelorussian Republic Trade-Union Council on the Working and Living Conditions of Women and on the Protection of Mothers and Children. This Commission participates in the formulation and review of proposals and recommendations designed to bring about improvements in the living, working and leisure-time conditions of women and in the protection of mothers and children. There are similar commissions operating under all the councils and trade-union committees.

The material and legal guarantees of the equality of women in the Byelorussian SSR are being constantly expanded.

During the period 1981-1985, the global social product in the BSSR increased by 26.5 per cent, and the national income by 32.5 per cent instead of the 23.3 per cent foreseen under the plan (the average annual growth rate for national income was 5.8 per cent). As a result, real per capita income rose by 13 per cent, the average monthly wage of industrial and office workers by 15 per cent, and remuneration for the labour of collective farm workers by a factor of 1.5. There was a 26-per-cent increase in the social consumption funds, which in 1985 exceeded 5,000 million roubles. Residential housing with a total area of more than 23 million square metres was turned over for use, and additional hospitals, kindergartens and nurseries, cultural establishments and service enterprises were built. About 80 per cent of national income was directly channelled to the satisfaction of the requirements of the population. Payments and allowances financed out of the social consumption funds rose by more than 1,000 million roubles.

Measures aimed at further improving the living and working conditions of women and the protection of mothers and children are an integral part of the socio-economic development strategy for Soviet society put forward at the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

In accordance with the Law on the State Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Byelorussian SSR for the Period 1986-1990, adopted by the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR on the basis of the decisions of the Thirtieth Congress of the Communist Party of Byelorussia, real per capita income is to increase by 14.5 per cent, the average monthly wage of industrial and office workers by 14.2 per cent, the pay of collective farm workers by 18.1 per cent, and the social consumption funds by 23 per cent. More than 420,000 flats will be built, the level of medical care will continue to rise, further additions will be made to the network of public health facilities, and social security coverage will be improved.

All these measures are intended to ensure a rational combination of public and family elements in the raising of children, an improvement in the situation of working mothers, a reduction in living standard disparities in families caused by the presence of children, and the creation of favourable living conditions for young families.

The women's councils have an important role to play in ensuring the successful application of the measures that have been planned. These councils have now been brought under a unified system within the Republic. On 20 January 1987, there was a republic-wide conference of women at which a Women's Council of the Byelorussian SSR, headed by Mrs. Nina Mazai, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR, was established.

PART II

Comments on the individual articles of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Comment on the second preambular paragraph of the Convention

The women of the Byelorussian SSR fully support the initiatives of the Soviet State on behalf of peace and, in particular, the Programme to secure the total and general elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, to free mankind of the threat of self-destruction, and to ensure the reliable security of the present and future generations, which is contained in the statement of 15 January 1986 by M. S. Gorbachev, Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Byelorussian women welcomed with deep satisfaction the decision of the Soviet Government to extend its moratorium on nuclear explosions until 1 January 1987 and, following that, until the first such explosion carried out by the United States of America.

The women of the BSSR are actively engaged in the mobilization of efforts for the maintenance of peace. They are participating in the work of the Byelorussian Committee for the Defence of Peace, the Byelorussian and other branches of the Soviet Peace Foundation, and the regional Committees for the Defence of Peace. Of the 135 members of the Byelorussian Committee for the Defence of Peace, 53 are women, and there are three women in the Committee's 11-member presidium. Women are performing an active role in the work of the Soviet Peace Foundation, specifically in its Byelorussian Branch, of whose various commissions 45 per cent of the members are women.

During the period beginning in 1981, the Republic has been the scene of a number of major events that were conducted under the general theme of strengthening peace and involved the participation of large numbers of women. These included:

- May 1981: "Peace March" in the city of Vitebsk, involving the participation of 10,000 persons;

- July 1982: "Peace March 82", organized on the initiative of the women's peace-campaigner organizations of the Scandinavian countries, the Soviet Committee for the Defence of Peace and the Committee of Soviet Women, along the itinerary Stockholm-Helsinki-Leningrad-Moscow-Minsk. A total of 50,000 residents of Minsk, more than half of them women, took part;

- October 1983: A women's anti-war demonstration in the city of Minsk numbering 75,000 persons;

- May 1984: A women's anti-war demonstration in the city of Minsk numbering 100,000 persons;

- May 1984: A youth meeting of 5,000 persons under the slogan "Peace to the children of the planet say the children of war";

- October 1984: An anti-war demonstration and meeting of student youth numbering 50,000 persons;

- May 1985: A meeting of 60,000 persons in the hero-fortress of Brest, involving the participation of peace envoys from the Polish People's Republic and the German Democratic Republic; a demonstration and meeting of 100,000 persons in the city of Minsk;

- October 1985: A "Peace March" of 50,000 persons during the Disarmament Week of Action in the city of Vitebsk; anti-war demonstrations by 30,000 persons in Mogilev and Grodno; and anti-war demonstrations and meetings numbering 10,000 persons in Soligorsk, Borisovo, Molodechno and Mozyr.

The period from 7 to 13 May 1986 was proclaimed by the World Peace Council as a "Week of Action for Security and Co-operation in Europe", and to mark this event mass meetings were held in each district of the city of Minsk. At these meetings, resolutions were adopted and forwarded to United Nations headquarters. The City of Vitebsk was the scene of a demonstration and meeting that brought together 50,000 persons and at which the text of a letter to the United States Government calling on it to join the Soviet nuclear explosion moratorium was adopted.

On 1 September 1986, a demonstration and meeting took place in the city of Brest in support of the peaceful initiatives of the USSR. More than 40,000 workers of that city together with 160 representatives of the All-Poland Peace Committee took part in those events.

Women accounted for about 50 per cent of the participants in the above-mentioned activities. They also played an active role in a number of international meetings of peace supporters, several of which took place in the Byelorussian SSR.

The Byelorussian Committee for the Defence of Peace maintains contacts with such women's anti-war organizations as "Mothers for Peace" in Great Britain and the United States and "Grandmothers for Peace" in the United States. In all, contacts have been established with 36 organizations based in Great Britain, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and other foreign countries. The Committee annually receives from 50 to 70 foreign delegations and tourist groups. Byelorussian women have travelled abroad at the invitation of international and national organizations of peace campaigners. Women hold positions in the delegations of the BSSR to the General Assembly of the United Nations and to many other international organizations and their subordinate bodies.

Comment on Article 2

The equality of the rights of women and men in the Byelorussian SSR was established in the first Constitution of the BSSR, adopted in 1919. This equality is also guaranteed under the Constitution of the Republic currently in force, which was adopted in 1978 and which, in particular, contains the following provisions:

"Article 32. Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR are equal before the law regardless of their origin, racial and national affiliation, sex, education, language, attitude towards religion, the nature of their occupation, their place of residence and other circumstances.

"Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR are assured equal rights in all areas of economic, political, social and cultural life."

"Article 33. Women and men in the Byelorussian SSR enjoy equal rights.

"The implementation of these rights is ensured by granting women opportunities equal to those of men for acquiring education and vocational training and in the

areas of employment, remuneration for work and professional advancement, as well as in social, political and cultural activities, and also by special measures to provide safe working conditions for women and to protect their health; through the creation of conditions to enable women to combine work with maternity; and through the legal protection of mothers and children and their material and moral support, including the granting of paid leave and other special benefits to pregnant women and mothers and the gradual reduction of the working day for women with young children."

The equality of all citizens before the law and the courts is asserted in article 9 of the Code of Criminal Procedure of the Byelorussian SSR (adopted at the fourth session of the fifth convocation of the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR on 29 December 1960), which states:

"Justice in criminal cases is administered in accordance with the principle of the equality of citizens before the law and the courts, regardless of their origin, social and property status, racial and national affiliation, sex, education, language, attitude towards religion, the nature of their occupation, place of residence and other circumstances."

Any manifestations of discrimination against women are subject to the punishments provided for, specifically, in Chapter 9 of the Criminal Code of the Byelorussian SSR "Crimes against the political, work-related and other rights of citizens". These include the punishments contemplated for the illegal dismissal of a woman for personal reasons, for example, because of her unwillingness to cohabit (articles 116 and 134), and for the refusal to hire a pregnant woman or nursing mother or for dismissing her on these grounds (article 136).

The Soviet legislation of the Byelorussian SSR and the practices that have been developed in its application reliably guarantee equal and just treatment even for women offenders.

A number of articles of the Criminal Code (CC) of the BSSR and of the Correctional Labour Code (CLC) of the BSSR, and also the provisions regarding preliminary guarded confinement in the Byelorussian SSR, establish special, privileged and less severe conditions for the serving of sentences by women sentenced to the loss of liberty than the régime stipulated for men. According to article 37 of the CC of the BSSR, the fact that a woman was pregnant at the time she committed a crime is regarded as an extenuating circumstance.

Convicted women who display a conscientious attitude towards their work and observe the rules governing their confinement may be allowed to reside outside the correctional colony during the time they are released from work for reasons of pregnancy and maternity and also until the child completes its second year (article 33 of the CLC of the BSSR). In such cases, the convicted women are settled near the territory of the colony and are kept under supervision. They may wear normal civilian clothing; carry money on their persons and make unrestricted use of it; mail letters; receive printed matter, packages and money orders; arrange meetings without restrictions; etc.

The personnel and administrative staff of the correctional labour colonies for convicted women consist in the main of female persons.

The legislation in effect in the Byelorussian SSR effectively guarantees the rights of women. All assaults on their honour and dignity are prosecuted under the law. There is provision for criminal responsibility for such offences as rape, illegal abortion under conditions posing a threat to the health of the woman, malicious refusal to make child-support payments, the keeping of dens of vice and the practice of pandering for personal profit, the act of coercing a woman into marriage or of preventing her from marrying, bigamy or polygamy, etc.

Article 3

The provisions of this article are addressed in the comments on the relevant articles of the Convention.

Comment on article 4

In seeking solutions to the problem complex "working women - maternity - child-rearing", account is taken of those socio-economic and psycho-physiological characteristics of women that make it necessary to apply a special approach to the employment of female labour. These characteristics require, in the first place, work of an appropriate content to be performed under appropriate conditions and, secondly, a special working régime to enable the woman to combine rationally her working career with motherhood and other family roles.

Working women enjoy many privileges under their social insurance benefits, which are provided and paid for by the State.

A series of measures has been devised and implemented in Byelorussia for the purpose of improving the working conditions of women in accordance with the government and trade-union decree "On the introduction of new standards for maximum permissible loads for women in the manual lifting and moving of heavy objects", adopted in 1981, and also with the decree "On standards for maximum permissible loads for women in the manual lifting and moving of heavy objects", adopted in 1982. These legal documents forbid the use of female labour in operations that are particularly strenuous or harmful to the health of women at heavy-industry enterprises and also in underground work. The general provisions have been made more specific by the adoption of a special List of production processes, occupations and operations for which the use of female labour is banned, including such occupations as bulldozer operator, driver of trucks with a cargo-carrying capacity of over 2.5 tons, welder, worker engaged in the performance of operations involving the use of toxic substances, etc. Women may not be used for carrying heavy objects exceeding the established weight limits.

The Byelorussian SSR is a party to a number of International Labour Organisation conventions regarding safeguards in the employment of women, in particular the Convention concerning the Employment of Women in Underground Work in Mines of All Kinds.

Comment on article 5

The legislation of the Byelorussian SSR is based on the principle of the full equality of women and men in all areas of political, social, economic and cultural life. The aim of this legislation is to achieve the total eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customs rooted in the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes. The Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR contains a statement to the effect that one of its tasks is the elimination of harmful vestiges and customs of the past in family relations.

An important role in the ultimate dismantling of obsolete stereotypes regarding the role of women within the family belongs to the mass media. The problems that may arise in this connection are discussed in regular radio and television programmes ("Alesja", "Podruga", "Semja"). These problems also receive particular attention in the special magazine for women Rabotnitsa i sjaljanka ["The Working and the Rural Woman"], in addition to which sections dealing with the same subjects have appeared in many periodical publications. In bringing these issues to the attention of the public, the emphasis is on increasing the volume of information and improving its quality and on rendering the work of the mass media more effective in organizational terms.

The educational system, beginning with kindergarten and extending through the higher institute of learning, also has an important function to play in inculcating a sense of respect for women and in fostering recognition of the equality of their role in all walks of life, including the area of family and marital relationships. Since 1983, the secondary schools have included in their curricula a special two-year course on "Ethics and the Psychology of Family Life". As accompanying materials, a number of textbooks for students and methodological aids for teachers have been prepared.

In accordance with the legislation on the family and marriage, questions pertaining to the raising of children are resolved jointly by the spouses (articles 20 and 65 of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR). The father and mother have equal rights and duties in respect of their children. This principle continues to apply to parents even in the event that their marriage has been dissolved (article 64 of the Code).

The law requires parents, in raising their children, to show concern for their physical development, studies and preparation for a socially useful occupation. It also contains a direct assertion to the effect that parental rights may not be exercised in a manner contrary to the interests of the children (article 62).

Comment on article 6

The nature of the socialist system excludes the pre-conditions for traffic in women and the exploitation of the prostitution of women.

The Byelorussian SSR is a party to the following international conventions: the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Minor Age, the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, the Slavery Convention, and the Supplemental Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery.

The legislation of the Byelorussian SSR provides for a whole range of measures aimed at preventing the abuse of women. Articles 115, 116 and 117 of the Criminal Code of the BSSR contain clearly defined standard punishments for rape, the coercion of women into sexual intercourse, and carnal knowledge of a person who has not yet attained sexual maturity.

Comment on article 7

The policy objective of the Soviet State is to encourage the full involvement of women in political and public life. Women's right to participate on an equal footing with men in the direct management of the affairs of State is guaranteed under the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR and, in particular, under article 46, which states:

"Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR have the right to participate in the management of State and public affairs and in the discussion and adoption of laws and decisions of national and local significance.

"This right is ensured by the possibility of voting and being elected to the Councils of the People's Deputies and other elected governmental bodies and of participating in nation-wide discussions and votes, in the exercise of people's control, in the work of State agencies, public organizations and voluntary non-governmental bodies, and in meetings organized by working collectives and at the individual's place of residence."

The right of women to vote in all elections had already been established under the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR adopted in 1919. Article 85 of the Byelorussian Constitution currently in force and adopted in 1978 states: "Elections of deputies are general elections: all citizens of the Byelorussian SSR who have reached their eighteenth year have the right to vote and to be elected, with the exception of persons who have been legally declared insane."

Nearly all women who have reached their eighteenth year take part in the elections. Like men, women who live in remote communities where there are no polling places are provided with transport to bring them to where they can cast their ballot. In the case of persons who, because of the state of their health or for other reasons, are unable to present themselves personally at the polling place, the ballot box is brought to where they are located. No separate statistics are kept in the Byelorussian Republic on the percentage of women voters, but some indication of the scale of voter participation can be seen in the fact that 99.99 per cent of all persons eligible to vote did so in the 1985 elections to the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR and to the local Councils of the People's Deputies. A total of 180 women, or 37.1 per cent of all the deputies, were elected to the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR, while 42,673 women, or 49.9 per cent of all deputies, were elected to the local Councils of the People's Deputies.

Women deputies participate in the discussion of proposed legislation, in the adoption of laws, in the approval of the economic and social development plans and of the State budget, and in the decision-making process, including that relating to the most vital issues of domestic and foreign policy. Women are members of the commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR and of the commissions of the local Councils of the People's Deputies.

On 9 April 1981, the Government adopted the Decree on the Standing Commissions of the Local Councils of the People's Deputies of the Byelorussian SSR, laying down the basic principles for the organization and activities of these commissions and their formation. These bodies include commissions directly concerned with problems pertaining to the working and living conditions of women and the protection of mothers and children (article 14); commissions on health care and social security (article 19); and commissions on housing, town planning and municipal services and amenities (article 21).

July 1986 saw the adoption of a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and the Council of Ministers of the USSR on measures to further enhance the role and strengthen the responsibility of the Councils of the People's Deputies for an acceleration of socio-economic development. This decree provided, in particular, for a higher degree of responsibility on the part of the Councils for meeting the needs of the public in the areas of housing, social and cultural facilities and amenity services.

Women are playing an active role in the work of the trade unions. In 1985, 117,500 women (60.2 per cent of the total number of persons elected) were selected to serve as chairmen of enterprise trade-union committees and trade-union organizations; 97 women (50.5 per cent) were elected to the management bodies of the Byelorussian Republic Trade-Union Council; 427 women (53.3 per cent) to similar posts within the regional councils; and 1,064 women (52.1 per cent) to higher-level positions on the republic-wide branch trade-union committees. Many branch trade-union committees are headed by women.

Women are extensively represented in the elected bodies of the Communist Party of Byelorussia, including the Central Committee. In addition, they hold senior positions as enterprise and organization heads, judges, public procurators, State farm directors and principals of eight-year and secondary schools. The Deputy

Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR and the Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the BSSR are women, as are also two ministers and two deputy ministers. All told, women account for 64 per cent of the personnel of the agencies of State government and economic administration and of the bodies with responsibility for managing the activities of the co-operative and public organizations.

On 9 April 1981, a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted, approving the Statute on citizens' meetings according to their place of residence and on the establishment of community (village, street, district and house) committees in the Byelorussian SSR. The Statute confirms that the institution of the residents' meeting provides a forum for the direct participation of the population in the management of State and public affairs and in the adoption of decisions regarding matters with local and State-wide implications, including questions pertaining to the work of the educational, cultural and health-care institutions, the sport facilities, the retail trade enterprises, the public dining establishments and the amenity services. The residents' meetings examine bills, other enactments of the highest organs of State authority and administration, and also decisions taken by the local Councils and submitted for public discussion, in addition to which they provide an opportunity for the participants to familiarize themselves with current legislation and with the most important rulings of the local Councils of the Peoples' Deputies and their executive organs. Further, the Statute defines the role of the village, street, district and house committees as instruments for voluntary community activity by the population with a view to promoting the development of useful and constructive initiatives on the part of the public and contributing to the broad-based involvement of the citizenry in the solution of work-related, economic and socio-cultural problems.

Comment on article 8

Women in the Byelorussian SSR are playing an active role in the work of international organizations. They participate on a permanent basis in the activities of the General Assembly of the United Nations and of its other bodies and specialized agencies. They are amply represented in the delegations sent abroad by State agencies and by the scientific, cultural and sporting organizations of the Republic.

Comment on article 9

In accordance with the legislation in effect in the Byelorussian SSR, marriage by a male or female citizen of the Byelorussian SSR with a foreign citizen or with a stateless person, and also the dissolution of such a marriage, has no effect on the citizenship of the spouses. In turn, the acquisition or loss of citizenship of the Byelorussian SSR and, in this way, of citizenship of the USSR by one of the spouses does not affect the citizenship of the other spouse.

The Byelorussian SSR is a party to the International Convention on the Nationality of Married Women.

Article 31 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, which is concerned with citizenship of the Byelorussian SSR and the equal rignts of citizens, makes it clear that every citizen of the Byelorussian SSR is a citizen of the USSR. The grounds and procedure for the acquisition or loss of Soviet citizenship are governed by the 1978 Law on Citizenship of the USSR. This law establishes that citizenship of the USSR may be acquired through birth, i.e., by virtue of the fact that a child is born of Soviet citizens (article 10, paragraph 1). A child both of whose parents held citizenship of the USSR at the time of its birth is a Soviet citizen, regardless of whether or not it was born within Soviet territory or outside it (article 11).

The law also sets forth the provisions for determining whether the child enjoys Soviet citizenship in cases when only one of its parents is a citizen of the USSR. Article 12 of the law specifies that when the parents, one of whom was a citizen of the USSR at the time of the child's birth, are of different citizenship, the child is a citizen of the USSR if: (1) it was born within the territory of the USSR, and (2) it was born outside the USSR, but its parents, or one of them, at that time had a permanent place of residence within the territory of the USSR. In the case of different citizenship on the part of the parents, one of whom at the time of the child's birth held Soviet citizenship, and if at that time both parents had a permanent place of residence outside of the USSR, the citizenship of a child born outside the USSR is determined with the joint consent of the parents.

In the event that one of the parents at the time of the child's birth was a citizen of the USSR while the other was stateless or unknown, the child is recognized as a citizen of the USSR regardless of where it was born (article 12 of the law). These provisions of the Law on Citizenship ensure that, as far as possible, the problem will be resolved in favour of recognizing the child as a Soviet citizen, and thus contribute to preventing cases of stateless children or, in any event, to reducing their number. When both parents are citizens of the same country, the question of the citizenship of the children is resolved according to the constitutional principle of the equality of rights of the woman and the man, i.e., the law excludes the possiblity of any preference being given to the citizenship of the child's father.

On 27 August 1981, the Government adopted a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR "On the procedure for admission to citizenship of the Byelorussian SSR", in accordance with which foreign citizens and stateless persons having a permanent residence within the territory of the Byelorussian SSR may, on their application and regardless of their racial or national affiliation, sex, education and language, be admitted to citizenship of the Byelorussian SSR and, ipso facto, to citizenship of the USSR.

Comment on article 10

The basic principles underlying the system of education in the Byelorussian SSR are laid down in article 43 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, which states:

"Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR have the right to education.

"This right is secured: by the fact that all forms of education are free; by the existence of universal compulsory secondary education for young people; by the extensive development of vocational-technical, secondary specialized, and higher education based on the relevance of what is taught to life and economic activity; by the expansion of correspondence course and evening education; by the availability of State scholarships and benefits to students and other persons enrolled in educational programmes; by the free distribution of school textbooks; by the possibility of attending a school offering instruction in one's native language; and by the creation of appropriate conditions for self-education."

As a result of the practical implementation of the provisions of the Constitution, women have gained broad access to all forms of education. Thanks to their full social equality, the women of the Byelorussian SSR are able to acquire any profession or occupation that is in accordance with their inclinations, vocation or aptitude, as well as with the needs of society, but which does not involve working conditions of the kind that might be harmful to their health. In conformity with article 20 of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR, marriage does not limit a woman in her selection of an occupation, profession or place of residence.

The most outstanding achievement in the area of education in recent times has been the introduction of general compulsory education. At present, 99.9 per cent of young men and women, following their completion of the eight-year school, go on to secondary education in the senior classes of the secondary general education schools and at the secondary technical trade schools and the secondary specialized institutions of learning. In 1984, the system of free textbooks for all students of general education schools was introduced.

Currently, there are 779,000 women specialists with higher and secondary specialized education employed in the national economy (as opposed to 663,000 in 1980). Women account for 55.4 per cent of the total number of specialists with higher education (54.5 per cent in 1980); the figures for specialists with secondary specialized education are 65.2 and 64.5 per cent, respectively. This ratio is predetermined by the composition of the student body: more than half of the enrolment (55 per cent at the higher educational institutions and 59 per cent at the secondary specialized colleges) are girls. Women display the greatest interest in occupations in the areas of economics and law (77 per cent of the students); education, art and cinematography (73 per cent); and health care, physical culture and sport (55 per cent). The proportion of women in the total number of scientific workers is increasing and currently stands at 40 per cent. During the 1985-1986 academic year, 3,847,000 persons were enrolled in one or another form of education in the Byelorussian SSR (3,627,000 during the 1980-1981 academic year), 161,000 persons were registered at the industrial trade schools (150,000 during the 1980-1981 academic year), and 182,000 were pursuing studies at higher educational establishments (177,000 during the 1980-1981 academic year).

For the period 1986-1990, there are plans to build schools to accommodate 272,000 students. During this same period the Republic's higher institutions of learning will provide training for more than 150,000 persons, and the technical colleges for over 200,000 specialists.

On 20 June 1984, the Government adopted a decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR "On measures to implement the decisions of the April (1984) Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the first session of the eleventh convocation of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on the basic areas in the reform of the general education and vocational school system". In accordance with this decree, the purpose of the reform is to elevate the work of the general education and vocational school system to a qualitatively new level. The measures envisaged provide, in particular, for a further expansion of vocational training for girls; for the more complete satisfaction of the needs of the urban and rural population for children's pre-school centres, with particular attention to be given to cities with a high level of economically active women; for the more extensive use for these purposes of the possibilities of building kindergartens and nurseries, and for the introduction in rural localities of teaching and educational establishments of the new "School - Kindergarten" type.

During the current five-year period the essential work in the task of providing the population with pre-school establishments is to be completed. In this connection, there are plans to build kindergartens to accommodate 160,000 children.

On 13 February 1984, a decree of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted under the title "On general-education boarding schools, kindergartens and other boarding establishments". Pursuant to this decree, additional measures are to be taken so as to make further improvements in the work of the general-education boarding schools, kindergartens and other boarding establishments and to ensure that they provide the necessary conditions for the teaching, education and medical care of their children.

Comment on article 11

There is no discrimination of any kind in the Byelorussian SSR against women in the area of employment. The principle of the equal rights of women and men is secured through a number of material and legal guarantees. These are laid down in the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR and include the right to work, the right to a State-guaranteed wage commensurate with the quantity and quality of the labour performed (article 38), the right to rest (article 39), the right to healthy and safe working conditions (article 40), the right to free vocational training and the upgrading of job qualifications (article 38), and the right to material security in old age, in the event of illness and following the loss of the ability to work (article 41). Women's right to equal opportunities at the work-place and in respect of equal pay and professional advancement is asserted in article 33 of the Constitution, in accordance with which "women and men in the Byelorussian SSR enjoy equal rights".

The overwhelming majority of the able-bodied female population of the Byelorussian SSR (about 93 per cent) participate in some form of economic activity. Women account for 53 per cent of the total number of workers. Working women represent a large proportion of the persons employed in education (75 per cent), in public health and physical training (82 per cent), in trade, public dining, credit operations and State insurance (85 per cent), in the cultural area (77 per cent), in the agencies of State government and economic administration and in bodies with responsiblity for managing the activities of co-operative and public organizations (66 per cent), and in science and the scientific support sector (55 per cent).

A direct consequence of the progress achieved in the area of science and technology may be seen in the fact that industry has become the leading area of employment for women. The largest number of women are employed in the precision engineering and radio industries, where they account for 65-67 per cent of the total work-force.

Measures to ensure the necessary working conditions for women are written into the collective contracts that govern the work of enterprise personnel and that include a special section entitled "Working and living conditions for women workers and the provision of assistance for the raising of children". The measures adopted at the national level in this connection have been mentioned in the comment on article 4 of the Convention.

A subject of great attention in the Republic is the improvement of women's qualifications. Efforts in this direction are facilitated by the fact that not only do women enjoy the same opportunities as men for acquiring education and the same access to the graduated skill-improvement programme, but there has also been instituted for them a preferential system of vocational training and retraining.

In 1985, the number of active members of the scientific and technical societies (NTO) in the Republic totalled 550,700 persons, of whom 253,300 were women. More than 150,000 women have distinguished themselves through their rationalization proposals and inventions.

In accordance with Byelorussian labour legislation, women may not be arbitrarily refused employment nor may their wages be lowered for reasons connected with the fact that they are pregnant or nursing a child. The dismissal, at the initiative of the management, of pregnant women, nursing mothers and women with children of up to one year of age is not permitted, except in cases involving the total liquidation of the institution, enterprise or organization, in which event dismissal, although permitted, must be accompanied by job-placement in another position.

Working women enjoy many privileges under their social insurance benefits, which are provided and paid for by the State. Social insurance funds are used to pay working women benefits for the temporary loss of the ability to work, for pregnancy and maternity, for the birth of a child, for the care of sick children, for old-age and disability pensions, for the loss of a breadwinner, and also to authorize their accommodation at sanatoria and rest homes or, in the case of their children, at pioneer camps.

On 17 December 1982, the Government adopted a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR amending and supplementing the Code of Labour Laws of the Byelorussian SSR. For example, article 167 was supplemented, to make it possible for a woman, at her request, and following paid pregnancy and maternity leave in the amount of 56 days prior to the birth and 56 days following it (70 days in the case of an abnormal birth or the birth of two or more children), to be granted partially paid child-care leave until the child completes its first year, during which time an allowance is to be paid as a State social insurance benefit. In addition, she may also be granted, at her request, additional unpaid leave for the care of her child during its first 18 months of life. A change was made in the wording of article 168, increasing the partially paid and unpaid periods of leave for women who have adopted children of up to 18 months of age. In accordance with the amendments, the decree provides for new forms of State social insurance benefits for women in connection with child care up to the first year of age.

Comment on article 12

In the Byelorussian SSR, safeguarding the health of the population is one of the Government's primary social tasks. The Constitution of the BSSR provides for the operation and expansion of the State health-care system (article 24) and also establishes the citizens' right to health-care services (article 40). This last-mentioned article states:

"Citizens of the Byelorussian SSR have a right to the protection of their health. This right is secured: through free and qualified medical care dispensed at State-operated health care institutions; through the expansion of the network of treatment and health-enhancement centres; through the further development and improvement of industrial safety engineering and sanitation; through the implementation of broad-based preventive programmes; through measures designed to ensure a healthy environment; through special concern for the health of the younger generation, including a ban on any form of child labour not connected with training and instruction for work; and through scientific research aimed at reducing and preventing morbidity and ensuring long and active lives for all citizens."

The guarantees provided under the Constitution are based on constant improvements in the work of the entire medical care system.

On 3 June 1982, a decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted "On the implementation of the Law of the BSSR on Health Care and on Measures to Further Improve the Protection of Health", in which there is provision, specifically, for the introduction of more effective forms and methods of health-enhancing, therapeutic and preventive medical care for women and children; for the building of additional children's hospitals, clinics, and consultation offices for women and children; for the prohibition of the employment of women in occupations that are unusually strenuous or harmful to their health; and for the further expansion (with construction improvements) of the network of children's pre-school establishments and their summer country villas, pioneer camps and children's sanatoria.

At present there are 880 hospital facilities in the Republic, as opposed to 873 in 1980. In 1985, for every 10,000 inhabitants there were 129.6 hospital beds (125.2 in 1980). The number of medical establishments providing out-patient clinical services to the public increased in 1985 to 1,352 (1,319 in 1980), the number of pregnancy and maternity beds to 7,468 (7,269 in 1980), and the number of women's consultation offices, children's clinics and out-patient centres to 673 (623 in 1980). During that same year of 1985, for every 10,000 inhabitants there were 37.3 doctors (33.9 in 1980).

Mother and child care in the Byelorussian SSR is provided by an extensive network of general medical facilities (including treatment and prevention) for women and children, and involves measures to protect working women on the job. Other aspects of this system are: the availability of social assistance for mothers and children; free medical attention for mothers and children; and the payment of pregnancy and maternity benefits, allowances for the medical treatment of children, and aid to single mothers and mothers with large families. The mother and child care establishments operate according to the clinical examination and treatment method. Special preventive-medicine and infertility-treatment sections have been established at the women's consultation offices. Pregnant women are kept under systematic observation and receive home care. In-patient maternity assistance is available in the cities and rural areas to all women who are about to give birth or who have recently been confined. No hiring obstacles may be placed in the way of pregnant women or nursing mothers. In accordance with the Republic's criminal legislation, officials found guilty of refusing to hire a pregnant women or nursing mother are liable to punishment in the form of correctional labour for a period of up to one year or of dismissal from their position (article 136 of the Criminal Code of the Byelorussian SSR). The law also establishes a special working-day régime for working mothers and women with children of up to one year of age. In addition to their general rest and meal-time break, these women are granted additional interruptions in their working day for the purpose of nursing their children. Breaks of this kind, which must be of not less than 30 minutes' duration each, are to be granted no less frequently than every three hours. In order to lighten the working conditions of pregnant women and nursing mothers, and also of women with children of up to one year of age, they may not be employed for night work, for overtime work or for work on what are normally non-working days, nor may they be sent on mission.

In June 1984, the State Committee on Labour and Social Affairs of the USSR and the All-Union Trade-Union Council adopted a resolution approving the "Rules on the system and conditions for the application of sliding (flexible) working hours for women with children".

In the Byelorussian SSR there are no limits on the right to motherhood or on family size. Family planning, including the decision as to the number of children, is left to the husband and wife alone. Abortion is legal. The public has unimpeded access to contraceptive devices. At the same time, maternity is encouraged through material and moral incentives of all kinds. The honorary title "Heroine Mother" and the decorations "Maternal Glory" and "Motherhood Medal" have been introduced. Mothers with numerous children are eligible for a whole range of allowances and special benefits, including a lower pensionable age.

Comment on article 13

Working women enjoy a number of privileges under the social insurance system, which is financed by the State.

Social insurance funds are used to pay working women benefits for the temporary loss of the ability to work, for pregnancy and maternity, for the birth

of a child, for the care of sick children, for old-age and disability pensions, for the loss of a breadwinner, and also for travel passes to sanatoria and rest homes and, in the case of their children, to pioneer camps.

In recent years these special benefits have been considerably expanded under decrees of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia and of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR.

On 15 May 1981, a decree was adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Byelorussia and the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR, entitled "On measures to provide greater State aid to families with children". This decree provides, in particular, for the following measures: the expansion of the system of kindergartens and nurseries, extended-day schools and groups, pioneer camps and other children's establishments; the extensive introduction of the practice of part-time work (with a shorter day or shorter week) for women and of the flexible hour system; improvements in the job conditions of working women, including a speed-up in the rate at which they are being released from strenuous and other unhealthy forms of work, and also a significant reduction in the number of women working night shifts; measures to improve the living conditions of families with children and of newly married couples; greater opportunities for family rest and relaxation; further improvements in the quality of medical care for women and children and in the work of the women's consultation offices, children's clinics, and midwifery and gynaecological establishments; improvements in the quality of the clinical monitoring of pregnant women and children; increased attention to the problems of improving mother and child care, strengthening marital and family relations and raising children; the introduction of better and more effective methods for propagandizing among the public a view of the family as one of the important moral assets of the socialist society; greater attention to the task of enhancing the prestige of motherhood; the creation of an atmosphere conducive to greater concern and respect for the family on the part of the public, and the introduction of methods to permit sound family rest and relaxation; and stepped-up work among young people to propagandize the socialist way of life and to inculcate a sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the family and society, and a respectful attitude towards children, women and mothers, and elderly persons.

In 1985, working women received 49.1 million roubles in the form of child-care benefits for children of up to one year of age. A one-time benefit was introduced for working women on the birth of a child, and also for women pursuing full-time studies; in 1985, a total of 10.7 million roubles was spent for benefits of this kind. Since 1 December 1981, monthly State allowances have been paid to single mothers for each child. At the same time, the eligibility age limit for children's allowances has been raised from 12 to 16 years (18 years in the case of students).

Since 1981, women with two or more children of up to 12 years of age have been eligible for a supplemental three-day period of child-care leave, which may be extended, unpaid, to two weeks.

On 14 August 1985, the Government adopted a decree of the Council of Ministers of the BSSR "On measures for the construction of co-operative residential houses for young people", which provides, in particular, for specific preferential loan-repayment terms for young married couples.

A subject of great attention in the Byelorussian SSR is the creation for the public, including women, of the necessary conditions for engaging in physical culture and sport. At present there are 159 large stadia and 16,000 football fields and sporting grounds in the Republic. In 1985, 3.3 million persons regularly participated in physical culture and sport (1.9 million in 1980), of whom about 40 per cent were women.

In 1985, some 80,000 persons spent time relaxing at rest homes and boarding houses, some 50,000 persons at leisure-time centres, and a total of 1,696,000 persons at holiday and tourist facilities. During that same year the Byelorussian tourist establishments of the trade unions alone catered to 508,000 tourists and 8.1 million holidaymakers; of this number, women accounted for more than 70 per cent. Also in 1985, there were 6,373 club-type establishments in the Republic (6,311 in 1980).

Comment on article 14

In the Byelorussian SSR rural women enjoy all the rights contemplated in the Constitution of the BSSR and all the privileges and advantages provided for under Soviet legislation. They fully exercise their right to education and vocational training, to the free selection of a profession or occupation, and to equal pay for equal work.

The level of development of agricultural production in the Republic is intimately linked to the work of agricultural specialists. At present, women account for about 40 per cent of the agricultural specialists with higher education employed in production-related positions, and for more than 53 per cent of those with secondary specialized education. Currently, agricultural specialists with higher and intermediate qualifications, including women, are trained at four advanced and 27 secondary-level specialized training establishments in the Republic. Particular attention is focused on the training of key personnel for the occupations in greatest demand: mechanical milking operators, cattle raising and fattening operators, fodder preparation operators, etc. In 1983, the number of women undergoing training for these and other occupations increased by a factor of 3.4 in comparison with the 1976 figure. All women wishing to work in agriculture are provided with employment. They represent about one half of all collective farm members.

In recent years a number of measures have been adopted to further improve the working and living conditions of women, to better safeguard their health and protect them on the job, and to introduce additional special benefits and forms of social assistance for working women, including those with children. The mechanization of such operations as the cultivation and harvesting of cereal and silo crops and the planting and field care of potatoes has been completed. A high level of mechanization has been achieved in the harvesting of potatoes and flax and in the application of mineral fertilizers. This has made it possible to lighten the labour of more than 70,000 women engaged in agricultural production. Women equipment operators are being provided with agricultural machines of the latest design. The output standards for women equipment operators are 10 per cent lower than for their male counterparts, and the six additional days of leave in effect for male operators are being increased to 12 working days for women operators. Eligibility for old-age pensions on preferential terms begins in the case of women with the completion of 50 years of age and after 15 years of service.

For the purpose of preventing occupational diseases, preventive clinics offering specialized procedures are being set up at agricultural production sites.

The collective farms operate according to a system combining a guaranteed monetary remuneration for labour with additional payments as premiums for exceeding the planned average per-hectare yield or, in the case of stock raising, the planned productivity. Rising labour productivity is bringing about a steady improvement in the living standards of the rural population, with the way of life of women in the countryside coming increasingly to resemble that of women employed in the industrial sector. During the period from 1981 to 1985 there was a 1.5-fold increase in the wages earned by collective farm workers; this remuneration is to rise by an additional 17-19 per cent during the next five-year period.

Women in rural areas enjoy the same privileges as the remaining female population of the Republic. There is provision in their case too for children's allowances, special benefits for pregnant and nursing mothers, and for the granting of paid and unpaid leave for pregnancy, maternity and the care of sick children. In addition, rural women are also covered by the legislative provisions banning the employment of women in occupations involving strenuous and, for them, harmful working conditions. The outlays for pensions and allowances as well as for the education and health care of the rural population are financed out of the State budget and the centralized social insurance fund for collective farm members.

During the period from 1981 to 1985, the budget of the State social insurance system and of the centralized social insurance fund for collective farm workers in the Byelorussian SSR increased from 504.9 million roubles to 837.2 million roubles.

In 1980, there was a 40-per-cent increase in minimum pension benefits for women collective farm workers. Since 1985, there have been increases for collective farm members in minimum pension entitlements for old age, disability and the loss of a breadwinner, and pension payment levels set more than 10 years ago have been raised. Moreover, additional benefits have been introduced, and measures have been taken to increase the number of boarding homes for pensioners and disabled persons in rural localities.

On 5 May 1981, a decree of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted, entitled "On supplemental local tax benefits". This decree provides, in particular, for exemption from the building owners' tax and land tax for citizens of 60 years of age and older in the case of men and 55 years of age and older in the case of women, when they have no sources of income other than the income received from their personal subsidiary agricultural plot.

During the period 1986-1990, residential housing with a total area of 11,180,000 square metres will be built in rural areas, which is 1.5 times more than during the preceding five-year period. In addition, the system of children's pre-school establishments will be enlarged so as to accommodate an additional 87,000 children.

The economic activity of rural women is combined with a high level of public and political activity. These women are represented in the Councils of the People's Deputies, including the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR. Women are elected to leadership positions in Party, Communist Youth League (Komsomol) and trade-union organizations, and can be found as chairmen of collective and State farms and as members and directors of consumer co-operative organizations.

Comment on article 15

The Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR specifies that all citizens of the Republic, regardless of their sex and other circumstances, are equal before the law (article 32) and before the courts (article 155). The system of justice in the Republic is based on these principles. In addition, justice is administered only by a court in which the judges and the people's assessors (elected lay judges) are independent and subject to the law only.

In the Byelorussian SSR there is a system of bodies that monitor the observance of the constitutional rights of women. One of the key places in this system is reserved for the Commission of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR on the Working and Living Conditions of Women and on the Protection of Mothers and Children, which is vested with broad powers. In accordance with article 112 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR, "All State and non-governmental public bodies, organizations and officials are obliged to carry out the requirements of

the commissions of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR. ... The recommendations of the commissions are subject to mandatory review by the State and public organs, institutions and organizations. The commissions must be notified within a specified period of the results of the review or of the measures taken".

Ultimate responsibility for supervising the strict and uniform observance of the laws, including those that guarantee the rights of both women and men, by all ministries and departments, enterprises and institutions, co-operative and public organizations and their officials within the territory of the Byelorussian SSR lies with the bureaux of the Office of the Public Procurator. The college of barristers is available to assist the citizens of the Republic in legal matters. An important role in ensuring compliance with women's rights is assigned to the trade unions, which, working through an extensive network of technical and legal inspectorates and special commissions, supervise and monitor the observance of the legislation on the employment of women.

As a result of all of these factors, the Byelorussian SSR has established a system for the legal protection of its citizens, including women, which rests on a basis of absolute equality.

Comment on article 16

Article 51 of the Constitution of the Byelorussian SSR states:

"The family is under the protection of the State. Marriage is based on the voluntary consent of the woman and the man. The spouses enjoy totally equal rights in family relations.

"The State shows concern for the family through its creation and development of an extensive system of children's establishments, through the organization and improvement of amenity services and public dining facilities, through the payment of benefits on the birth of a child, by granting benefits and allowances to families with numerous children, and through other forms of family benefits and assistance as well."

The legislation lays down two major conditions for entering marriage: the mutual consent of the persons contracting the marriage, and their attainment of marriageable age (18 years). Failure to comply with either of these conditions will result in the recognition of the marriage as null and void.

The equality of the spouses' rights and duties in family relations is established under the law for all citizens of the Byelorussian SSR, as laid down in article 4 of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR:

"All citizens enjoy equal rights in family relations.

"The law prohibits any direct or indirect limitation whatsoever of the rights of the spouses or the establishment of any direct or indirect advantages on entering into marriage and in the area of family relations by reason of origin, social and property status, sex, education, language, attitude towards religion, the nature of occupations, the place of residence and other circumstances."

In accordance with the marriage and family legislation of the Byelorussian SSR, the personal rights of the spouses, including the right to select a name when entering marriage, the right to the consensual settlement of matters pertaining to the raising of the children, and the right to the free selection of an occupation or profession and of the place of residence, are to be equally enjoyed by both spouses.

In cases when the further cohabitation of the spouses and the preservation of the family is impossible, the marriage is terminated through divorce (article 35 of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR). A marriage may be dissolved in a civil registry office when both spouses are in agreement and there are no minor children, or in a court of law. Whereas the contraction of marriage requires as a necessary condition the consent of both parties entering into the marriage, divorce proceedings may, in accordance with the laws of the Republic, be initiated by either one of the spouses or by both; however, in the interests of the mother and the child, the law prohibits the dissolution of a marriage without the consent of the wife if she is pregnant or has a child of up to one year of age (article 33 of the Marriage and Family Code).

When dividing the goods that constitute the joint property of the marriage, the court always operates on the principle that both spouses are to receive an equal share. In individual cases, the court, taking into account the interests of minor children, may permit a departure from the principle of the equal sharing of the spouses in the disposition of the joint marital property (article 22 of the Marriage and Family Code). In accordance with the right established under article 43 of the Marriage and Family Code, that spouse who changed his or her name to another name at the time the marriage was contracted, may, after it has been dissolved, continue to use this name or, should she or he be unwilling to do so, may resume the use of the name by which she or he was called before the marriage. In ruling on the dissolution of a marriage, when there is a controversy between the spouses as to whom the children will live with after the marriage has been dissolved, and also as to which of the parents will be required to pay child support and in what amount, the court determines which of the children will be placed in the custody of which of the parents and also which of the parents will be required to pay child support and in what amount.

Parental rights may not be exercised in a manner contrary to the interests of the children. The interests of the children are to prevail in the settlement of any matter that concerns them, including the selection of the child's name and surname and the question of the manner in which a parent living apart from a child is to participate in raising it and in associating with it.

In recent years additional measures have been adopted to provide greater material support for children with parents who fail to comply with their maintenance obligations.

In February 1984, the Government adopted a decree of the Council of Ministers "On the introduction of temporary allowances for minor children for the period spent in searching for parents evading the payment of support". In accordance with this decree, the payment of allowances for minor children during the time spent in searching for parents who have failed to meet their support obligations is the responsibility of the social insurance authorities of the union republics. In this connection, a special account for the accumulation and allocation of funds for the payment of these allowances has been opened with the State Bank.

On 12 February 1985, a decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian SSR "On some changes in the procedure for exacting support payments for minor children" was adopted, which brought a simplification in the judicial proceedings for the recovery of support payments in favour of the female plaintiff and shortened the claim review period.

In accordance with the provisions of the Marriage and Family Code of the Byelorussian SSR (articles 114 and 154), all citizens of the Republic of full age have the right to act as guardians, foster-parents and adoptive parents regardless of their sex, with the exception of persons who have been deprived of their parental rights or who have been declared in the manner prescribed by the law as lacking legal capacity or as having only limited capacity.

On 22 December 1983, the Housing Law of the Byelorussian SSR was adopted, article 44 of which provides that housing is to be made available on a priority basis to persons with a need for improved housing conditions, specifically, mothers who have been awarded the title "Heroine Mother" or the decoration "Maternal Glory" or the medal "Motherhood Medal", families with numerous children, single mothers, and families following the birth of twins.

On 25 April 1984, a decree of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian SSR and the Byelorussian Republic Trade-Union Council was adopted, entitled "On the approval of the Rules for the recording of citizens requiring improved housing conditions and for the allocation of housing in the Byelorussian SSR". In accordance with these Rules, housing is made available on a priority basis, specifically, to mothers who have been awarded the title "Heroine Mother", the decoration "Maternal Glory", or the "Motherhood Medal"; to families with numerous children, including three or more minor or parentally dependent children; to single mothers; and to families into which twins have been born.

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As is evident from the the information presented in this report, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, as a party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, is undeviatingly implementing all of its provisions.